

MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Conservation Working Group
Meeting Minutes
September 16, 1997

Conservation Working Group (CWG) members in attendance were: Rachel Saunders, Chair (Center for Marine Conservation); Jack Wickham (Sierra Club-Ventana Chapter); David Iverson (Save Our Shores); Vicki Nichols (Save Our Shores); Ellen Farout-Daniels (Friends of the Sea Otter); Daphne White (Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History); and Joanne Flanders and Lisa Ziobro (Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary).

Guests in attendance were: Jenny Carless (MBNMS Newsletters); Andrew De Vogelaere (MBNMS); Scott Benson (Beach COMBERS Program); Karin Strasser Kauffman (MBNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council).

I. CWG Administration

A. The July 15, 1997 meeting minutes were approved with modifications.

B. General Announcements:

- The next CWG meeting is scheduled for October 21, 1997 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Moss Landing Harbor District Office;
- The next Vessel Traffic Workgroup meeting is scheduled for October 30, 1997 in Half Moon Bay;
- The Santa Cruz Sanctuary Birthday Celebration is scheduled for September 20, 1997;
- The Groundbreaking for Moss Landing Marine Laboratories is scheduled for September 19, 1997;
- BAY NET fall training begins on September 24, 1997;
- The State Budget Sub-Committee is scheduled to meet on October 29, 1997 in Santa Cruz;
- The Environmental Defense Fund has scheduled an evening promotion of Bill Ballantine for December 9, 1997 in Santa Cruz (hosted by SOS) and December 10, 1997 in Monterey; his presentation will be on marine reserves;
- SOS has scheduled a Fundraising Sail for September 17, 1997 and October 8, 1997 from 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.;
- Sanctuary Stewards classes are starting up on September 17, 1997;
- Melissa Hippard is no longer working at SOS; Sue Harper has replaced her and Taylor Bucci has been hired to replace Susan Heistand;
- OSPR has scheduled a conference on the effects of oil on wildlife for November 3 - 6, 1997 at the Doubletree Hotel.

II. MBNMS Office Report

Joanne Flanders gave the MBNMS office report. See Attachment A. The following items were not included in the written report:

- MBNMS Staff are planning a party to honor Terry Jackson;
- Personal watercraft proponents may be requesting that the current zones be expanded.

III. Advisory Council Update

Rachel Saunders reported on the Advisory Council terms. MBNMS has received approximately thirty-five requests for applications for the expiring Council seats. Applications must be received in the MBNMS office no later than October 3, 1997.

CWG members reconfirmed their position that the Conservation Representative on the Council should serve as the CWG Chair. The CWG also agreed that the Alternate Conservation Representative on the Council should serve as the CWG Vice Chair. The CWG expressed support for Rachel Saunders to continue as the CWG Chair and Council Representative; and for Vicki Nichols to serve as CWG Vice Chair and Council Alternate. The CWG agreed to wait to vote for the CWG Chair and Vice Chair pending the final selection of the new Council members.

IV. The Beach COMBERS Program - Andrew and Scott Benson

Andrew De Vogelaere and Scott Benson gave a presentation on the Beach COMBERS (Coastal Ocean Mammals and Birds Education Research Survey) Program.

The primary goal of the program is to record the deposition rates of marine mammals and birds. Secondary objectives include: identifying beaches, determining sampling intervals, determining time of day or tidal cycles, and educating volunteers and the public-at-large.

Sampling is being conducted at ten beaches per month at lengths of five km. Weekly surveys are being conducted at two of the ten beaches.

Beach COMBERS currently has twenty-eight active volunteers and has held six training classes.

Early highlights of the program's findings are:

- common murres and sooty shearwaters are most common birds identified on the beaches;
- California sea lions and harbor seals are most common mammals identified on the beaches.

During the month of August, more than 400 dead common murres were identified. Hypotheses for this phenomenon include:

- parent-chick phenomenon
- feather disease
- more murres in the bay
- oil
- El Nino
- virus/bacteria
- gillnets/drowning
- biotoxins

V. Issue/Program Updates and Discussion

- The Makah tribe in the State of Washington has requested permission to harvest five gray whales per year. Karin Strasser Kauffman, MBNMS Advisory Council, has been contacted by environmental groups within California in opposition to the request. She requested that Joanne Flanders contact the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary for more details on this issue.
- The Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill are requesting a permit to discharge tertiary-treated wastewater into the Pajaro River; this topic will be discussed at the October 3, 1997 Council meeting;
- The GFNMS has been petitioned by the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin to ban personal watercrafts; GFNMS is requesting information on personal watercraft impacts on the environment.

VI. Future Agenda Items

- Aquaculture Farms;
- Sea Otter Die-Off;
- Big Creek Buoys.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Ziobro
MBNMS Advisory Council Coordinator

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MBNMS Manager's Report

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